

Letter from J. Q. Adams.

Messrs. Isaac L. Hedge, Seth Sprague, Jr. and Elihu Hobart.

Quincy, Oct. 27, 1838.

Gentlemen.—The nomination of so large and respectable a portion of the twelfth Congressional District of Massachusetts, as those whom you represent, is the more gratefully received and accepted, because accompanied with their declared approbation of the general course which I have hitherto pursued as the Representative of the District in the House of Representatives of the United States.

If there was in the Councils of the Nation, one Representative of the people of this Union bound by more unyielding ties than all the rest to adhere to the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence, and to defend them alike through direct assault and prevaricating compromise, it was the member who held his seat by the confidence of the Sons of Pilgrim Fathers. It was the social covenant of the Mayflower, that taught the first practical lessons of equal human rights, and laid the only just foundations of Government in the mutual pledge of Faith. Could the sons of those whose feet alighted on the Plymouth rock have been represented by one who would listen and nod assent to the axiom, that freedom lives only by suction from the blood of the slave, he would not only have disgraced his parentage, but must and would have been disowned, by every freeman of the district, of whatever party, bearing one drop of pilgrim blood in his veins.

In the unhappy diversities of opinion, prevailing among our fellow citizens at this time, it affords me consolation and encouragement to observe, that upon this subject there appears to be among my constituents of this District, a great and cheering unanimity of sentiment.

All adhere to the right of the people not only to petition and remonstrate to their Representatives and rulers, but to the duty of those Representatives and rulers to *listen* to their complaints—to *read* and *consider* their petitions, and to answer them, not always indeed with conciliation, but always with argument, concession, and with kindness. I have not heard of one

freeman of this District, who considered the duty of a Legislative Assembly to the sacred right

Petition fulfilled, by *receiving*, and then refusing to *read* or *consider* the complaints or remonstrances of the people. Wheresoever and whomever this distinction originated, it is a fruit from the blossom of the May-flower.

The freedom of thought, the freedom of press, the freedom of speech for yourselves, the freedom of debate for your Representatives, will inexpressible pleasure I say, appear to be equal

to all of my constituents of the twelfth Congressional District. I hope and trust God, they will never give their confidence to, or trust their representative, any man prepared to surrender them to the oppressor's wrong, or to sink them in the political kennel of party discipline.

Against the iniquitous and most perfidious project of annexing the new slave ridden Republic of Texas to this Union, the opinion of the whole people of this District appears equally unanimous. Nor are the instigations to a war with Mexico more congenial to the moral principle or the public policy of any one of my constituents. I congratulate you and them, that these imminent dangers have foisted upon us now for sport, and now for advantage. But let the conviction, that you are honest men fasten upon them, and they will no longer trifle with you. They will treat you with marked respect. They will open their ears to your words; and yield to your reasonable wishes. Sound policy is here, as in every good cause, at one with integrity.

You cannot stand too erect. A righteous cause demands uprightness in its supporters. Bend a little, and you will be counted flexible. Party spirit will seize upon you, and torture you into subserviency to its unhallowed purposes.

Remember, that with the balance of power in your hands, you have the key of the old Bastille in your possession. It is for you, under God, to say, whether the prisoner shall continue to languish and pine in darkness, or, free from chains, walk forth into sunlight. You cannot shake off the responsibility of yielding your power for the deliverance of the slave. Can you for a moment wish to do so? Can you help blessing God for the privilege of removing the burden from your crushed brother?

Let the 'scattering votes,' then, cast in a thousand places, show your integrity. Count them anything but lost. Scattered they may be, lost they cannot be. They will confirm while they develop the soundness of your principles.

They will make bare your strength. They will place you beyond the reach of contempt or neglect. They will point you out as standard-bearers in the 'sacramental host of God's elect.'

'Cast your bread upon the waters.'

Adhere strictly to the pledge, and it will prove an earnest of your final and glorious triumph!

ELECTION DAY—DON'T FORGET,

1. To go to the polls.

2. To vote for none but good men and true.

3. To get your ballots written before you go.

4. To write a good number of similar ballots for other abolitionists, who may not come prepared, and see to it, that they are supplied.

5. To be as bold as a lion and as firm as a rock—unmoved alike by the frowns and the flatteries of party. Don't be whipped, nor duped into the traps.

WATKINIAN.

POLITICAL TREACHERY.

the pitcher shall be broken at the fountain, the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it.

I am, with grateful sentiments to you, and those whom you represent, for the renewed testimonial of your and their confidence, Gentlemen.

Your friend and fellow-citizen,

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Bristol County.

The following are the replies of some of the candidates in Bristol County:

TAUNTON, Nov. 14, 1838.

DEAR SIR:—I have this day received your letter of the 31st ult. propounding to me interrogatories in behalf of the Bristol County Anti-Slavery Society; and for answer, refer you to my course in the Massachusetts Senate, and to a letter written to Andrew Robeson, Esqr., about one year since, and published in the newspapers of that time. That letter contains opinions I had long entertained and often expressed. I have since seen no reason to change them. I still believe slavery to be contrary to the laws of God and the best interests of man; that it ought not to be extended by the admission of new states into the Union, with constitutions tolerating so great an evil; and that it is the imperative duty of Congress to adopt immediate measures for its abolition in the District of Columbia.

I might leave the subject with this plain avowal; but that there may be no mistake as to my opinions on this and kindred subjects, I will briefly state what I believe to be the requisites of a sound system of legislation.

It should recognize, first, the rights of mind, among which are the rights of private judgement, petition and free discussion. These are of primary importance. They are not the gifts of society, but the attributes of man. They exist before government, above government, and their protection is one of the objects for which it was instituted. It may, it should guard against their abuse—prevent encroachments upon the rights of others, but it has no right to go farther. Whenever it does; whenever it encroaches upon the sacred rights of mind—it matters not under what form of government it takes place, it is tyranny.

Legislation should, in the second place, protect the rights of person. These are natural rights, which are guarded by the provisions of our Constitution, and form the basis of our form of government. But it is not sufficient that they have been recognized by the framers of our political institutions. They must be looked upon as *ineluctable*. Their undisturbed enjoyment is essential to well being; and to the extent of the

constitution, our lawgivers should secure that freedom, which is the inalienable birthright of every man, to all whose crimes do not render their restraint or confinement necessary to the peace and security of society.

Legislation should, in the third place, protect the rights of property. These have been more strictly guarded than the rights of mind or of person. In the undue estimation, in which property has been regarded, the rights of mind and of person have too often been sacrificed for its protection. This, in my opinion, is wrong. The rights of mind and person I regard as superior to the rights of property. But still, the rights of property should by no means be disregarded. They should be protected by law to their full extent. Men have a natural right to the fruits of their industry, and unless secured in their enjoyment, neither individuals nor communities can ever rise to their proper destiny.

Legislation should, in the fourth place, protect the rights of life. Like the laws of Providence, it should know no castes or classes, but operate alike upon each member of society. It should encourage competition, interfere as little as possible in favor of private interests, disconveniences, monopolies, show favors to none, but equal and exact justice to all.

Legislation should, in the last place, tend to progress. Improvement should be the test and motto. Never satisfied with what is erroneous and defective, it should be ever looking forward and striving for new degrees of excellence and perfection. We are all made capable of improvement and progress; our institutions are calculated to facilitate them; and if our legislators are true to the cause of humanity, true to the great trusts that are committed to them, our country will not only be rich and powerful, but great and glorious, and ever advancing in all that adorns and dignifies the character of man.

I am respectfully, your ob't servt,

H. WILLIAMS.

Rev. P. CRANDALL, Fall River.

FALL RIVER, Nov. 1st, 1838.

Rev. P. Crandall:

Dear Sir,—Your favor of the 31st ult.

in which you state it is made your duty, as the organ of the Bristol County Anti-Slavery Society, to propound certain questions to the several candidates nominated for the suffrages of the People of this County, has been duly received. And as I have no reason to doubt the purity of the motives which dictated the enquiries, I know of no sufficient reason why I should not give them a candid answer. And as my opinions on the subjects to which you refer have been freely expressed in conversation; and also in answer to a communication addressed to me by A. Robeson, Esq. President of the Bristol County Anti-Slavery Society, under date of Oct. 27th, 1837, permit me to refer you to the answer given to that communication, as expressing my present opinion on that subject. Permit me to refer you also, to the several resolutions passed by the last Legislature on the same subject, all of which had what support I was enabled to give them, and one of which may be deemed an answer to your second interrogatory. And as regards your first enquiry, I will briefly say, I believe Congress has the Constitutional power and right to abolish Slavery in the District of Columbia; and I can see no good reason why our National Legislature should not exercise that power and right without delay. That it will be done, as Congress is at present organized, I do not expect. But that the day is not far distant, when there will be a majority in the National Legislature, who will respect the rights of all classes, the oppressed as well as the oppressor, I think the signs of the times plainly indicate; and then, and not till then, will the desultory object to which you refer be accomplished.

I am respectfully yours,

JOHN EDDY.

NEW BEDFORD, Nov. 1st, 1838.

P. Crandall, Esq.

Sir.—Your communication of the 31st Oct.

is received, in which you, as the organ of the Bristol County Anti-Slavery Society, request of me an answer to the following interrogatories:—1st, whether I am in favor of the passage of a resolution by the State Legislature, declaring that Congress ought immediately to abolish Slavery in the District of Columbia. 2d, whether I am in favor of the passage of a resolution, declaring that no new State ought to be admitted into the Union whose Constitution tolerates Slavery. While I am writing this letter, the newspaper of the day, which has accidentally come into my hand, contains accounts of two mobs of this description, one at Darien in Georgia, and the other at Danbury in Connecticut. But, while the frequent occurrence of such outrages is disheartening to the friends of humanity and freedom, there have not been wanting, during the past year, developments of a different and far more cheering character. The recent work of Thome and Kimball on the present state of the British West India Islands, throws a new light upon the question of slavery as existing in this country, and has awakened in the minds of many the hope of an early, easy, and universally satisfac-

tory solution of this momentous problem, which they had before never ventured to indulge.

It would give me pleasure to enlarge at length upon these highly interesting topics, but as you appear to desire an immediate answer, I confine myself, for the present, to a few remarks.

I am, gentlemen, with great respect, your very obedient servant,

A. H. EVERETT.

Dr. Simeon B. Carpenter, Edward Mann, Esquires.

The letter referred to by Mr. Everett was published in the last Liberator. The passages in it are as follows:—

'The period, immediately preceding a convention of the slaves, is less favorable than some others for the introduction of the slaves into the market, and I might, perhaps, infer from my published writings, that occasions, not connected with the political or social injustice of slavery, and my belief, founded in the historical evidence, of the natural equality of the colored race with our own.'

These opinions, which I still entertain, influence my course in your letter.

'I am aware of no good reason why this slave should not be territory, belonging to the Union, in which new slaveholding States could be formed. The question, whether such States ought to be admitted, would be virtually precluded. If, however, were at any time submitted to me, I should answer in the negative.'

REPLY OF MR. HASTINGS.

MENDON, Nov. 1, 1838.

Gentlemen:

I have received your communication of the 26th ult. propounding certain questions touching the subject of slavery and the slave-trade.

When I consider the importance this subject has justly assumed in the public mind—deep and religious feeling with which it is regarded by many of my fellow-citizens—and the repeated and unparalleled attempts to stifle the discussion of it in the House of Representatives of this free republic—I can appreciate the motives, which induced you to address me in this way.

I resolved, That, as citizens and friends of the slave, we regard it as our solemn duty to exercise our political as well as moral influence for the complete and utter overthrow of the whole system.

Resolved, That, as consistent abolitionists, we cannot vote for any man, of any party, for a seat in Congress, who is not in favor of going to the extent of his constitutional authority for the immediate and complete extinction of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia and the Territory of Florida.

The debate on these resolutions occupied the morning session. At noon, the members of the Convention were furnished with copies of the correspondence below; and in the afternoon, it was read to the Convention, when, after some discussion on the merits of the replies of the respective candidates, and the proper course to be adopted in relation to them, the following resolution was adopted, after which the Convention adjourned.

Resolved, That, having heard the answers of Messrs. A. H. Everett and W. S. Hastings, in reply to Messrs. Carpenter and Mann, this Convention advises the abolitionists of this District to read the replies carefully, in the light of the above preamble and resolutions, and vote only for a worthy man.

Yours for the slave,

A. A. PHELPS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The questions addressed to the respective candidates were—

1. Are you in favor of immediately restoring the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, declared in the Declaration of American Independence, to 'inalienable' to every human being, irrespective of color, in the District of Columbia and the Territory of Florida, who has not forfeited the same by crime?

2. Are you in favor of the immediate abolition of the slave-trade between the States?

3. Do you think it would be the duty of a member of the next Congress, at an early day, to make or sustain such motions as shall be requisite to an effectual accomplishment of these objects?

The following is—

MR. EVERETT'S REPLY.

ROXBURY, MASS. Oct. 29, 1838.

Gentlemen:

I have your letter of the 26th inst. and cheerfully comply with your request, that I would give an early answer to the questions which you proposed.

Permit me to refer you, in reply to these inquiries, to my letter of November 3d, 1837, addressed to Mr. Orin P. Bacon of Dorchester, a printed copy of which, extracted from one of the newspapers of the day, is herewith enclosed.

You will perceive that it contains distinct affirmative answers to your inquiries, and also to some others of less interesting character, which had been previously prepared by Mr. Bacon, in reference to the same general subject.

Since writing the enclosed letter, I have seen no reason to change any of the opinions expressed in it; but have rather, on the contrary, been confirmed and strengthened in them by the events that have since occurred. The remarks which I there made upon the virtual suppression of the liberty of discussion among us, so far as the subject of slavery is concerned, were not only historically true, but proved to be of almost prophetic import. Within a few days after they were written, the country was

horror-struck by the fatal tragedy enacted at Alton, where a minister of religion was first mobbed for exercising the right of free discussion, and then murdered while defending his person and property against illegal violence.

In a sounder state of public feeling, such an incident would have roused a general burst of indignation throughout the Union. The comparatively feeble expression of opinion that followed it, proved too well how completely the prevailing terror of Lynch law had fastened itself upon the mind of the community, and paralysed the once lofty spirit of American liberty.

The manner in which the event was noticed at Boston was truly deplorable. The doors of Faneuil Hall, which are regularly thrown open without scruple to every party caucus and caucosal—every ladies' fair and Indian exhibition—were sternly closed against a formal application from the requisite number of our most respectable citizens—headed by one of those names, of which America, I might say, the civilized world—is justly proud—for permission to use it in expressing their feelings upon this detested outrage. Fortunately for the honor of Boston, a voice issuing forth from the heart of a generous people nullified this "fantastic trick" of a little brief authority, and Dr. Channing was at length allowed to make himself heard in Faneuil Hall.

The more recent conflagration at Philadelphia has thrown another glar of hateful light upon this disgraceful state of public opinion; and hardly a day passes, which does not witness, in some part of the Union, some fresh exhibition of the same spirit. While I am writing this letter, the newspaper of the day, which has accidentally come into my hand, contains accounts of two mobs of this description, one at Darien in Georgia, and the other at Danbury in Connecticut.

But, while the frequent occurrence of such outrages is disheartening to the friends of humanity and freedom, there have not been wanting, during the past year, developments of a different and far more cheering character.

The recent work of Thome and Kimball on the present state of the British West India Islands, throws a new light upon the question of slavery as existing in this country, and has awakened in the minds of many the hope of an early, easy, and universally satisfactory solution of this momentous problem.

2d. Are you in favor of the immediate abolition of the slave trade between the States?

The Constitution vests in Congress the power

to regulate commerce with foreign nations

and with the Indian tribes.

The power to regulate commerce with foreign nations and with the Indian tribes, is given in the same terms, as the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations and with the Indian tribes.

In regulating commerce with the Indian tribes, Congress has prohibited the trade in certain articles of merchandise; and under its power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, it

